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HOW SHOULD WE PREPARE?

BY CHARLES W. ELIOT

THE limits of preparedness, however broad or narrow, ought to be determined by both of two different needs: first, the need for a limited aggressive strength, and, secondly, the need for a defensive strength, limited, but capable of sudden effective expansion.

Just how much aggressive strength the United States will hereafter need depends on the issue of the present European struggle. If Germany comes out of the war holding Belgium, maintaining her complete military organization, and both free and able to enlarge her navy, the United States, in defense of her own rights and of the rights of all the free nations of the world, will need to join the Alliance which has been holding Germany in check, though thus far unable to defeat her. In joining that Alliance, the United States will wish to furnish such a quota of vessels, men, and munitions as will be suitable for a rich nation 100,000,000 strong, and united in adherence to fixed standards of public and private liberty, truthfulness, and justice. If, on the other hand, the Entente nations succeed in defeating the German undertakings in the present war, or in bringing the contest to a stalemate, there will probably result an international league for the prevention of war, in which the United States will wish to take part, if requested by the Entente belligerents to do so. In that case this country must be prepared to furnish whatever quota the International Council or Commission, created by treaty for the prevention of war, asks of us. The quota of the United States in the second case would, of course, be smaller than in the first, and might be chiefly naval; but, in either case, the quota should be of the best possible quality in all respects—vessels, artillery, munitions, submarines, aeroplanes, automobiles, hospital equipment, and all kinds of military and naval supplies.

Therefore, the United States should now put itself in condition to produce rapidly all these implements of war, should acquire a considerable stock of them all, and should train some moderate number of men—like 50,000 in the navy and 100,000 in the army—to use them with skill and thorough efficiency. The existing army and navy of the United States should be at once utilized to the full as schools for the training of soldiers and sailors; and careful records should be kept of the future careers of the men who have passed with credit through either service. They should be registered as reserves, and be kept account of by Reserve Bureaus of the army and navy. For giving this training to large numbers of men, the term of enlistment in the army and navy would better be short—probably not over two years, perhaps not over one year; so that each year many thousands of men should return to civil life, after receiving a thorough training in the work of a soldier or of a naval mechanic or sailor. These men would remain available during ten or fifteen years for immediate service in the army and navy, and they would be available for a much longer time to teach and train a quickly summoned army. The Academies at West Point and Annapolis should be enlarged, surplus graduates to be perhaps furloughed for appropriate civil employment without losing their army or navy status.

The international police, created to enforce the orders of the International Council or Commission which should result from even the partial success of the Entente Powers in the present war, would have two functions: The primary and supreme function would be the forcible prevention of international war; the secondary function would be the restoring of order in nations or communities—whether civilized or barbarous—which had fallen into anarchic conditions. The second of these functions might prove to be almost as important as the first; because, if well fulfilled, it would promote the effective use of capital in all parts of the earth, the spread of the mining and manufacturing industries through regions where they are now unknown, and the greater productiveness of agriculture. It might also be more frequently in exercise than the first. There would result, so far as differences of climate and of racial characteristics would permit, a gradual equalizing, as regards human comfort and productiveness, of the conditions of life and work in the different parts of the earth, and a more thorough development and

utilization of the natural resources of each and every country. Such policing would be for the common interest of all the nations; and the nation or community which had fallen into disorder and misery might accept such international intervention—on a large scale or a small—without objection; because it need not fear the loss of territory, or of any desirable independence. There is no loss of self-respect for an individual or a nation in yielding to an obviously overwhelming force, used not to crush, but to restore. Now and then, a Government which had failed to do its duty towards the people it governed, but still possessed some vitality, might be stimulated and really strengthened by an international pressure which would accomplish its object without reaching the stage of actual intervention.

However this war shall end, therefore, the United States will need in the future a military force somewhat larger than it now possesses, and available promptly for aggressive purposes, and also some additions to its naval equipment. If the war should now end suddenly on wrong terms—as is not at all likely—the United States will need a larger aggressive force than if the war should end after one or two years more, through the exhaustion of one side or the other; for, if the present drain on the capital of Europe goes on for one or two years more, it is impossible to imagine that any nation among the present combatants should desire to attack the United States, or indeed be able to do so without a long period for recuperation; and there is no other Power in the world that could have any possible interest in attacking this country.

In increasing the defensive strength of the United States, the necessary expenditure would be made as a species of insurance against a small chance of horrible calamity. The chance that any formidable attack would, or could, be made on either coast of the United States is very small. Indeed, it might properly be called infinitesimal; but, now that Germany has shown the world how terrible and crushing the results of conquest can be, the people of the United States feel like insuring themselves against any such disaster as has befallen Belgium and Northern France. What is the nature and extent of such an insurance? We should wish to defend against the most skilful possible attack the coast cities which contain not only innumerable valuable structures and precious contents of buildings in great variety, but also considerable docking facilities and railroad terminals. We

should be prepared to defend effectively every place which could afford an enemy a base of invasion, and opportunities for exacting heavy ransoms. The number of such places, however, on both coasts of the United States is not considerable, even if naval stations be included.¹

What is the nature of the equipment to be provided, in order to secure these various cities and bays against an immense fleet of hostile warships and transports? In addition to the effective navy which the United States now possesses, the equipment should consist of shore batteries of the most powerful and longest range guns, monitors and submarines, torpedoes, mines, and aeroplanes all of the best possible construction and in ample quantity. This provision should be made without unnecessary delay, but not until the experience to date of the present war on sea and land has been thoroughly utilized by American designers and manufacturers. The need of the country for insurance against the horrors of invasion is not so urgent that we should hasten to accumulate a great stock of military and naval material which would probably prove to be somewhat antiquated, if we should be attacked by an experienced invader whose equipment was thoroughly up to date.

Another expedient preparation for defensive warfare is the strengthening of the state militia or national guard. This public force is of unequal merit in the different states of the Union, and needs to be brought up to a common standard, and to be strengthened in number and in discipline. It needs to have more money spent on it; so that the training provided should embrace instruction in the use of rifles, grenades, machine-guns, and light and heavy artillery; in the use of the bayonet; in marching, camping, and entrenching; and in military hygiene as regards cleanliness, food, water supplies, and the care of the sick and wounded. Evening schools in military subjects should be maintained for militia officers. Officers and men should be kept in athletic

¹ A reasonable list would include Portland, Maine; Portsmouth, New Hampshire; Boston and Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts; Newport, Rhode Island; New York, Delaware Bay, Chesapeake Bay, Charleston, Savannah, Mobile Bay, New Orleans and Galveston on the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico; Puget Sound, Columbia River, San Francisco and San Diego on the Pacific Coast. There are, of course, other places on the coasts where an enemy might land and find some railroad connections; but he would find elsewhere no opportunities for exacting heavy ransoms; and he would not be able to inflict serious losses on the country as a whole, or interfere with the prompt assembling of military forces to repel the invader.

condition all the year by drills and interesting competitions; and employers of young men should continue wages during absence on militia duty. Every state should make adequate provision of uniforms, equipment, rifle-ranges, transportation, camping areas, and munitions, and encourage proper periods of field practice at the seasons which would interfere least with the prevailing industries.

A moderate amount of new legislation on the part of Congress is also desirable, to authorize the Government, in case of war, to take over vehicles, animals, transportation lines on land and sea, telegraph and telephone lines, foods, manufacturing plants, coal, gasoline, and the materials of munitions. These powers are necessary for the mobilization and maintenance of the national forces in time of war.

The preparation made for defensive purposes would, for the most part, be available for aggressive purposes as well, in case the European war should suddenly come to an end on conditions of peace which threatened gravely the public liberties of the civilized world. It is not inconceivable that the present conflict should come to such an end; but it seems in the highest degree improbable, when one recalls the fundamental interests for which Great Britain, France, Russia, and Italy are contending, the resolute purpose of all four peoples, and the fact that their combined resources in men and money greatly exceed the resources of the central monarchies and Turkey.

In the meantime, the United States is making the best possible preparation for military and naval defense and offense on its own part, by maintaining the rights of neutrals to manufacture and sell all sorts of military and naval material, making sure that its food supply is increased, cutting off superfluities in expenditure, increasing moderately its appropriations for the army and navy, and devising the laws needed to authorize the Government to mobilize promptly all the national forces, in case war becomes necessary for the safety of the country, or for an effective support of other Governments which stand for public liberty and public justice, and are in danger of succumbing temporarily to Governments that do not.

CHARLES W. ELIOT.